

Original: English

**REPORT
OF THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC
(İstanbul, 26-29 November 2018)**

1. The Thirty Fourth Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) was held on 26-29 November 2018 in İstanbul.

2. The Session was attended by representatives of the following Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC):

- 1- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- 2- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- 3- Republic of Azerbaijan
- 4- Kingdom of Bahrain
- 5- People's Republic of Bangladesh
- 6- Republic of Benin
- 7- Brunei Darussalam
- 8- Burkina Faso
- 9- Republic of Cameroon
- 10-Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- 11-Republic of Djibouti
- 12-Arab Republic of Egypt
- 13-Republic of Gabon
- 14-Republic of The Gambia
- 15-Republic of Guinea
- 16-Republic of Guinea- Bissau
- 17-Cooperative Republic of Guyana
- 18-Republic of Indonesia
- 19-Islamic Republic of Iran
- 20-Republic of Iraq
- 21-Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- 22-The State of Kuwait
- 23-Kyrgyz Republic
- 24-Libya
- 25-Malaysia
- 26-Republic of Mali
- 27-Islamic Republic of Mauritania

- 28-Kingdom of Morocco
- 29- Republic of Niger
- 30-Federal Republic of Nigeria
- 31-Sultanate of Oman
- 32-Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- 33-The State of Palestine
- 34-State of Qatar
- 35-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- 36-Republic of Senegal
- 37-Republic of Sierra Leone
- 38-Republic of Somalia
- 39-Republic of Tajikistan
- 40-Republic of Togo
- 41-Republic of Tunisia
- 42-Republic of Turkey
- 43-Republic of Turkmenistan
- 44-Republic of Uganda
- 45-State of the United Arab Emirates
- 46-Republic of Uzbekistan

3. The Russian Federation, Kingdom of Thailand, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in the Session as observers.

4. Serbia participated in the Session as a guest.

5. In addition to the OIC General Secretariat and the COMCEC Coordination Office the following OIC Organs/ Institutions attended the Session:

- 1- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
- 2- Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT)
- 3- Islamic Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)
- 4- Standards and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC)
- 5- Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group
- 6- Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)
- 7- Organization of the Islamic Ship-owners Association (OISA)
- 8- Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)
- 9- Federation of Contractors from Islamic Countries (FOCIC)
- 10- Islamic University of Technology (IUT)
- 11- Association of National Development Finance Institutions in Member Countries of the Islamic Development Bank (ADFIMI)
- 12- The Foundation Centre of Islamic Civilization (FOCIC)

6. Representatives of the following international organizations attended the Ministerial Session and Special Sessions:

- 1- Developing Eight (D-8)
- 2- Economic Cooperation Organization Trade and Development Bank (ECOBANK)
- 3- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
- 4- World Customs Organization (WCO)
- 5- Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)
- 6- Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI)

(A copy of the List of Participants of the Thirty Fourth Session of the COMCEC is attached as Annex I.)

7. The Meeting of Senior Officials of the 34th COMCEC Session that preceded the Ministerial Session was held on 26th and 27th November 2018 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Salih Mutlu ŞEN, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the OIC. The Senior Officials deliberated on the agenda items and prepared the Draft Resolutions for consideration by the Ministerial Session.

Opening Session

8. The Opening Ceremony of the Thirty Fourth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 28th, 2018 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, President of the Republic of Turkey and the Chairman of the COMCEC.

9. Welcoming the delegates, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed his wishes for the session to be most beneficial for the member countries, the Muslim World and the world in general. H.E. ERDOĞAN stated that as long as the Palestinians stick to their righteous goal, the invaders will never achieve their aims.

10. H.E. ERDOĞAN mentioned that the fate of the OIC region was determined by the World War I. Although a century has passed since this war, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed that the Region is still feeling the trauma of its effects very deeply.

11. H.E. ERDOĞAN continued his statement by highlighting the need for reforming the United Nations system. H.E. ERDOĞAN pointed out that the United Nations, in its current form, largely lacks the capability to counteract problems, in which five countries retain the ability to obstruct the system with their vetoes, regardless of the desires of the other member states and the UN Secretariat.

12. H.E. ERDOĞAN underlined the importance of fighting against terrorism and expressed that, as the Islamic world, there is a need for objecting to the destruction of the primeval cities of Islamic civilization and the creation of new terrorist states in the

region under the cover of DAESH as well as denounce the destruction of our future by such heinous organizations as FETO, PKK, AL-QAEDA, BOKO-HARAM and AL-SHABAAB.

13. H.E. ERDOĞAN stated that in order to minimize the risk of being subject to hostile attitudes in terms of economy, it would be a good start to increase the use of the national currencies in the commercial dealings between the Member Countries.

14. In the face of growing protectionist tendencies and increases in customs tariffs, H.E. ERDOĞAN pointed out that reducing non-tariff barriers and facilitating customs procedures will create a new opening for world trade, acting as a lifeline. In this respect, H.E. ERDOĞAN underlined the significance of the theme of this year's exchange of views session which is "Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States"

15. H.E. ERDOĞAN also underlined the importance of some crucial COMCEC projects such as the Trade Preferential System (TPS-OIC), the Gold Exchanges, the Real Estate Exchange and the OIC Arbitration Center. H.E. ERDOĞAN also stressed the need for accelerating the operationalization process of these projects and pointed out that Turkey has established a high level National Coordination Committee on COMCEC affairs.

16. While concluding his speech, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed his hope for all of the efforts aiming at developing cooperation among member countries of the OIC and COMCEC, would strengthen the collaboration between brotherly nations, and increase the prosperity of the Islamic Ummah.

(A copy of the text of the Inaugural Statement of H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN is attached as Annex II.)

17. Following the Inaugural Statement made by H.E. ERDOĞAN, the Secretary General of the OIC made a statement at the Opening Session.

18. His Excellency Dr. Yousef Al-OTHAIMEEN, the Secretary General of the OIC, thanked the Government of the Republic of Turkey for the traditional hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the success of this annual event. H.E. AL-OTHAIMEEN underlined that there is no doubt that the prioritization of trade and investment projects will go a long way in bridging the current gap in the member countries development paradigm, especially as it is aimed at reducing the widening unemployment among the youth and vulnerable segments of the OIC populations. H.E. AL-OTHAIMEEN also emphasized that the prioritization of trade and investment projects would also assist in mitigating the current crises brought about by increased migration of youth beyond the OIC region.

19. H.E. Al-OTHAIIMEEN also expressed his commends to all Member States that have continued to support the various activities of the OIC.

(The text of the Statement of the Secretary General of the OIC is attached as Annex III.)

20. The Heads of Delegations of Gabon, Indonesia and Qatar made statements during the Opening Ceremony. They appreciated the consistent support of the Government of the Republic of Turkey to the COMCEC's activities over the years and thanked H.E. ERDOĞAN for his wise guidance and leadership in enhancing economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member States. Highlighting the importance of improved customs risk management systems for facilitating trade in the member countries, they emphasized the need for enhancing regional integration, modernization of customs, digitalization, and exchanging knowledge in various fields.

21. H.E. Dr. Bandar M. H. HAJJAR, President of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group also delivered a statement at the Opening Session. H.E. Dr. HAJJAR expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Member Countries for their permanent support to the activities of the IDB Group. H.E. Dr. HAJJAR informed the delegations that IDB has recently started the implementation of the "President's five-year programme" which is based on the Islamic Development Bank's vision as well as the ten-year strategic framework of the Bank, which are both aligned with sustainable development goals. H.E. Dr. HAJJAR underlined that the five-year programme is based on fostering and broadening partnerships with various development parties, strengthening added value chains to amplify the development effect, innovating the appropriate development solutions and Islamic financing tools and strengthening the role of science technology and innovation to achieve socio-economic development in Member States.

(The text of the Statement of the IDB Group President is attached as Annex IV.)

22. Mr. Rifat HİSARCIKLIOĞLU, President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and the Vice-President of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture also made a speech at the Opening Session. Mr. HİSARCIKLIOĞLU stressed the importance of the private sector in the cooperation endeavors among the member states. Mr. HİSARCIKLIOĞLU also informed the delegations that OIC Arbitration Center will be operationalized in 2019. Mr. HİSARCIKOĞLU underlined that the OIC Arbitration Center will boost the intra-OIC trade and investment.

23. Following the Opening Ceremony, H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN received the Heads of Delegation.

Ministerial Working Session

24. The Ministerial Working Session of the Thirty-Fourth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 28th, 2018 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey.
25. The Session adopted the Agenda of the Thirty-Fourth Session of the COMCEC.
26. Following the adoption of the agenda, H.E. Ambassador Salih Mutlu ŞEN, as the Chairman of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), informed the Session of the outcomes of the Senior Officials Meeting as well as the policy recommendations on “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States” deliberated by the SOM and submitted to the consideration of the Ministerial Session.
27. Dr. Mohammad SAEED, Senior Advisor at International Trade Center, has delivered a keynote speech on various dimensions of the trade facilitation Dr. SAEED underlined the importance of having an effective customs risk management system in terms of facilitating trade among the Member Countries.
28. Following the presentation of Dr. Mohammad SAEED, the Exchange of Views Session of the 34th Session of the COMCEC was held with the theme of “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States.”
29. Afterwards, the Ministers and heads of delegations of Member Countries made presentations on their country experiences with regards to trade facilitation efforts in their respective countries.

Side Events/Special Sessions

30. The 33rd Meeting of the Sessional Committee was held on November 25th, 2018 as a sideline event with the participation of the relevant OIC Institutions.

(A copy of the report of the 33rd Meeting of the Sessional Committee is attached as Annex V.)

31. The side event on the “COMCEC Project Funding: Experiences of the Project Owners” was made on November 27th, 2018. During the event, the owners of the successful projects funded under the fourth project call of the COMCEC Project Funding made presentations with respect to the implementation of their projects.
32. The special session on “Harnessing the Potential of Trade Facilitation for Regional Integration” was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Dr. Mohammad SAEED, Senior Advisor, International Trade Center. The speakers for this special session were as follows: Mr. Salifou TIEMTORE, Director of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Dr. Patricia SOURDIN, University of

Adelaide and Mr. Hacı Hasan Murat ÖZSOY, Director General of Risk Management and Control Ministry of Trade of Republic of Turkey.

33. The special session on the “Challenges in Customs Modernization and Possible Solutions” was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Mr. Aleksandr KUZMENKO, Head of Legal Department of Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). Mr. Jalal BENHAYOUN, CEO of PORTNET, Mr. Ömür GEBEŞ, General Director of Customs and Tourism Enterprises Co Inc. and Mr. Mourad ARFAOUI, Regional Development Manager for MENA Region World Customs Organization, were the speakers of this special session.

34. The special session on “Private Sector Involvement in Trade Facilitation” was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Mr. Fatih ÜNLÜ, Senior Expert at COMCEC Coordination Office. The speakers of this special session were as follows: Mr. Francisco Jaime King CANCINO, Vice-Chair of PSCG under WCO and Director General of Customs and Logistics Services, Mrs. Donia HAMMAMI, Vice-President of KGH Customs Services and H.E. Hani Salem SONBOL, CEO of ITFC.

35. The special session on “Facilitating Trade in the Digital Era: Challenges and opportunities for Increasing Cross-Border E-Commerce” was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Mr. Bilal Khan PASHA, Consul General of Consulate General of Pakistan. The other speakers at this session were, Mr. Ibrahim Nour Eddine DIAGNE, Former Chairman of African Alliance for E-Commerce (AAEC), Ms. Ana HINOJOSA, Director of World Customs Organization and Mr. Hakan ÇEVİKOĞLU, CEO of ePttAVM.

36. The Forum on Trade Facilitation was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Mr. Bilal Khan PASHA. The speakers of the Forum were the moderators of the above-mentioned Special Sessions.

37. As a sideline event of the 34th Session of COMCEC, COMCEC Project Funding Exhibition took place on 26-29 November 2018.

Closing Session:

38. The Closing Session of the Thirty-Fourth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 29th, 2018 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey.

39. Mr. Bilal Khan PASHA, Consul General of Consulate General of Pakistan, Rapporteur of the Senior Officials Meeting, summarized the salient points in the Resolutions.

40. The Session adopted Resolution OIC/COMCEC/34-18/RES.

41. Afterwards, a signing ceremony was held. Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization (KOSGEB) of the Republic of Turkey and Libya Enterprise of the Libyan Arab Republic signed a memorandum of understanding.

42. H.E. Ambassador Hameed OPELOYERU, Assistant Secretary General read out the message of H.E. Dr. Yousef Al-OTHAIMIEN, Secretary General of the OIC. In his message H.E. Al-OTHAIMIEN extended his congratulations to the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 34th Session of the COMCEC and to all participants for the successful conclusion of the Session.

43. H.E. Amadou SANNEH, Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment of The Gambia made a statement on behalf of all participating States. His Excellency the Minister thanked the Government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting successfully the 34th Session of the COMCEC. H.E. SANNEH invited all the Member States to participate in the 14th Islamic Summit to be held in 2019 in The Gambia.

44. H.E. Mohammed Hashim ABDUL MAGED, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Iraq also made a statement and invited all the member countries to attend the “16th OIC Trade Fair” to be held on 7-13 April 2019, in Baghdad.

45. H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey, made a closing statement at the Session. H.E. OKTAY expressed that there is a growing protectionist wave in the world. H.E. OKTAY underlined that, in this conjuncture, eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers as well as simplification of customs procedures would be the right response to this protectionist wave for reducing trading costs.

46. H.E. OKTAY stressed that customs is the most critical component of trade facilitation process as well as being responsible for the security of the supply chain. H.E. OKTAY highlighted that it is necessary to balance both facilitation and security of trade with proper risk management techniques in customs. Moreover, H.E. OKTAY pointed out that modernization of infrastructure, adoption of information technologies and simplifying customs procedures will all help Member Countries in their endeavors for reaching a balance between facilitation and security of trade.

47. H.E. OKTAY underlined that the set of policy recommendations adopted by Ministers on “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member State” would enlighten Member Countries way towards trade facilitation and customs risk management.

48. H.E. Fuat OKTAY concluded his statement by expressing the significance of Member Countries’ active participation in various cooperation programs and projects conducted under the COMCEC.

(The text of the Closing Statement of H.E. Fuat OKTAY is attached as Annex VI.)

49. All documents submitted to the 34th Session of COMCEC will be available on the COMCEC web site (www.comcec.org).

